Further, Acetic Anhydride has been declared a controlled substance in 1993 leading to close monitoring of movement of the aforesaid chemical.

Removal of Import Restrictions Through W.T.O.

*82. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some countries are insisting on India, through World Trade Organisation or otherwise, to remove import restrictions on many consumer/farm products;

(b) if so, names of the countries, categories of goods and nature of restrictions sought to be removed, including the rationale thereof;

(c) the strategy of Indian Government to protect domestic industry against such moves;

(d) whether there are visible/invisible import restrictions in such countries particularly in U.S.A. and Japan and whether any study has been made in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI): (a) to (e) Article XI of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 provides that no prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes or charges, whether made effective through quotas, import or export licences or other measures shall be maintained by any Member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, under the exceptional provisions of Article XVIII of the GATT, India has some residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payments purposes. In May 1997. India has presented to the WTO a plan for the elimination of these restrictions on imports, including those on farm goods and consumer goods. This plan was considered at the consultations with India of the WTO Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions in June-July 1997, when noting the divergence of opinion among WTO Members on, inter alia, the length of the plan, it was agreed to conclude the consultations.

Subsequently, six WTO Members, namely, Australia, Canada, the European communities, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States of America, requested consultations with India under Article XXII of GATT 1994 and the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU). During these consultations, understanding has been reached with Australia, Canada, the EC, New Zealand and Switzerland in respect of the time-schedules for the elimination of residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payments purposes. Negotations towards a similar understanding with Japan, which has third party interest in each of these disputes, are in an advanced stage. At the request of the USA, a panel has been constituted on 18 November 1997 to examine the US allegation that the continued maintenance of quantitative restrictions on imports by India is inconsistent with India's obligations under the WTO Agreement.

These restrictions are proposed to be eliminated in a phased manner so that the interest of the domestic industry are protected. Simulatancously, efforts are being made to improve productivity of Indian Industry and to enhance overall competitiveness. Safeguard measures to protect domestic production, such as protectin through tariffs, anti-dumping measures, countervailing measures to offset the effect of unjustifiable subsidies and safeguard measures to prevent damage to domestic duction because of surgein imports, are proposed to be utilised effectively. Non-tariff barriers in countries for products of export interest to India are being taken up bilaterally or

through the WTO dispute settlement mechanism as appropriate.

Tourism in Punjab during the Ninth Five Year Plan

*83. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of action plans included in the Ninth Five Year Plan to promote and encourage tourism in the State of Punjab;

(b) the necessary funds allocated for this purpose; and

(c) the details of ongoing tourist projects sponsored by the Central Government in that State?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM: (SHRI SRIKANTA KUMAR JENA): (a) and (b) The Action Plans for the development of Tourism in any State is prepared by the respective State Government. However, the Department of Tourism provides financial assistance for the implementation of specific projects on the basis of proposals received from the State Governments and the merits of each case on any year to year basis. For the year 1997-98, the Department of Tourism has prioritised projects in Punjab for financial assistance as per the details given below:

	Rs. In Lakhs
1. Wayside amenities at Muktasar	25.00
2. Tourist Complex at Anandpur Sahib	30.00
3. Expansion of Tourist Complex at Goindwal	25.00
4. Expansion of Tourist Complex at Malout	14.25
5. Fairs and Festivals	
(a) Hola Mohalla	04.00
(b) Baisakhi Festival	2.00
(c) Harballabh Sangeet Samelan	02.00
(d) Rural Sprots Mela	02.00
Total	104.25

(c) There are 30 on-going projects costing a sum of Rs 425.85 lakhs assisted by the Central Government during Eighth Plan in the State of Punjab.

Defaulters in Allahabad Bank

*84. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 47 big business houses are persistent defaulters of Allahabad Bank; if so, the names of those business houses and amount of default;

(b) the number of suits filed by the bank for recovery of these debts and how many decrees obtained and executed;

(c) the loan position of Uptron India; and

(d) how many cases have been referred to BIFR?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (c) Allahabad Bank have reported that it is not a fact that all the 46 (not 47) defaulters which had been identified by the bank belong to big business houses. Keeping in view the secrecy provisions relating to customer-banker relationship as provided in various statutes, it is not possible to disclose the names of the banks' constituents other than those against whom suits have been filed by the bank. The details of constituents against whom suits have been filed by the bank are enclosued. (*see* below)

(b) and (d) Allahabad Bank have further reported that out of the 46 cases, 9 cases have been referred to BIFR, in 11 cases the bank has filed suits and in another 12 cases the bank has inititated action to file suits. As the suit filed cases are under process of hearing, no decree has been passed. The bank has been able to regularise or upgrade five borrowal accounts. With regard to the remaining cases the bank has taken up the matter with the loanee, State Government (where the company has been taken over) etc.